

## CHEAPEST THING IN CHICAGO IS LABOR OF CHILDREN

Children are the little morning glories of human life. They are blossoms of love and God sends them to redeem the world with fresh beauty.—The Rev. Dwight Newell Hillis.

The cheapest thing in the great city of Chicago is the labor of children, according to figures given the committee on industrial affairs at Springfield yesterday.

Wages paid to boys and girls by Chicago business men were cited by Miss Anna Davis of the Chicago public schools. The kiddies who quit school at 14 and start in on their first jobs sell their labor for almost close to nothing a week and they change jobs often.

"Sixty per cent of the boys and girls who start in to work at 14 years remain at one job from one to nine months," said Miss Davis.

"Out of 258 girls that I have investigated, 178 began at \$4 a week, 50 per cent less began at \$3 and 11 per cent more than \$4 a week.

"In many cases girls get only \$2 a week. And starting at this early age, only beginning their development toward womanhood, they are subject to heart trouble and tuberculosis.

"Two dollars a week is the average wage per week of the child between 14 and 16. The shifts from job to job and is employed about half the time.

"Drifting causes immediate delinquency. Over one-half the boys and girls who pass through the juvenile court are between 14 and 16, and not in school at the time of their arrest.

"Drifting also causes future inefficiency. We find only 3 per cent of the boys and girls who leave school at 14 later enter any skilled kind of work."

A Lithuanian working girl, Sada Laporte, came before the committee on request of Chicago women and told the story of what industrial hell in Chicago did to her and is doing to hundreds like her. She said:

"I started to work in a hair dyeing factory in Chicago when I was 14 years old. It was hard work.

"I saw many girls come in healthy and strong, with good looks on their faces. Then the dyes we worked with got into the blood of the girls. It poisoned them. They break down and have to quit their jobs and rest till they are able to go to another job somewhere else.

"In the dye factory were 1,000 other girls working. Many were my own age. We went in laughing and young and strong. We came out pale and played-out.

"I stayed three years. I came out with a body almost wrecked. Now I am trying to build it up again. And I am trying to get the education I should have had years ago. I am starting late to get what was mine by right long ago. I am twenty years old now."

Nearly everybody felt a little creepy and uncanny about the story of Miss Laporte, as she told it to the committee. Her eagerness for education, more health and more life made an awful contrast to her pale face and worn body robbed of its vitality by the industrial system of Illinois.

About 26,000 children between 14 and 16 are working in Illinois, it was stated by Oscar Nelson, state factory inspector. Employers are beginning to find that it doesn't pay to work children of that age, according to Nelson.

The proposed child labor law will stop children under 16 from work as wage earners in all classes of employment except agriculture and domestic service. The law does not apply to vacation time. It is aimed at getting the boys and girls into the schools instead of the shops and factories and stores.

Medical inspection is provided to protect children from going into work not suited to them. For a boy or girl predisposed to consumption it is an immediate death sentence to go into a dusty workplace. An 8-